

Remarks/Arguments

Claim Summary

By this Amendment, claims 1 and 6 have been amended.

Claims 1-10 remain pending in the application.

Allowable Claims

Applicants acknowledge with thanks the indicated allowability of dependent claims 3 and 8.

35 U.S.C. ¶102

Claims 1-2, 4-7 and 9-10 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. ¶102 as being unpatentable over Ikebe (US 6094326). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection with respect to the now-pending claims.

In the Office Action, the Examiner states:

“Applicant’s arguments filed 5/19/2004 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.

First, Applicant asserts on page 3:

“That is, the guide groove, into which the slider is engaged, is formed inside the casing, whereas the presently claimed invention recites the first guide groove as being formed on a front edge side of the casing body, and thus is exposed to the outside of the casing body.”

In response to applicant’s argument that the references fail to show certain features of applicant’s invention, it is noted that the features upon which applicant relies (i.e., thus is exposed to the outside of the casing body) are not recited in the rejected claim(s).”

In response, Applicants respectfully contend that the original claims 1 and 6 clearly indicate that the first guide groove is exposed to the outside of the casing body. That is, original claim 1 recited “the casing body has a first guide groove which extends in a direction in which the shutter is opened and closed, and which is formed on a front edge side of one of surfaces of the casing body.” Still further, original claim 1 recited “the first guide groove is formed between an upper surface of a front edge wall of one of the pair of half shells and a lower surface of a front edge wall of the other thereof, along the front edge wall.” Original claim 6 included similar language. By reciting that the first guide groove is formed on a “front edge side” of the casing body, it naturally follows that the first guide groove is exposed to the outside of the casing body.

Nevertheless, in an effort to expedite prosecution, claims 1 and 6 have been amended herein to expressly state that the first guide groove is exposed to the outside of the casing body. Thus, for *at least* the reasons already of record, Applicants respectfully contend that claims 1 and 6, and the claims dependent thereon, are patentable over the teachings of Ikebe.

As a separate matter, since Applicants believe that the original claims already required the first guide groove to be exposed to the outside of the casing body, and since Applicants have previously relied on such exposure in traversing the prior art rejection, it is submitted that the amendments herein do to raise new issues. Accordingly, entry of this Amendment After Final is respectfully requested.

Conclusion

No other issues remaining, reconsideration and favorable action upon the claims 1-10 now pending in the application are requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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